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A Letter

to an

Orthodox Minister

on

Revivals of Religion

by

Bernard Whitman

Boston

1831



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TO AN

ORTHODOX MINISTER,

ON

REVIVALS OF RELIGION.

BY BERNARD WHITMAN.

BOSTON:

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LETTER.

REVEREND SIR :

I am credibly informed that you publicly made the following statements respecting revivals of religion. You asserted that such excitements were enjoyed by none but orthodox denominations ; that they were produced by scriptural means and measures ; that they yielded the genuine fruits of the gospel ; that they were the special work of the holy spirit, and that all who opposed them were enemies to the cause of Christ. Now I firmly believe your declarations have no foundation in truth ; and to state the honest reasons for this belief is the design of the present Letter. And I would not have you suppose that I have undertaken to address you on a subject with which I have no experimental acquaintance. I can assure you, that I once defended the divine origin and beneficial tendency of such revivals ; that I denounced all who opposed them as boldly as you now do, and that nothing but a thorough knowledge of their injurious consequences, and a better acquaintance with the holy scriptures, convinced me of my dangerous error. I hope and pray, therefore, that my remarks and arguments may be instrumental in promoting the cause of pure and undefiled religion. I now proceed to the examination of your five propositions.

I. You assert that none but orthodox sects are favored with religious excitements. I think a plain statement of facts will prove your assertion untrue ; and also convince you, that these revivals do not depend upon the peculiar religious opinions of any christian denomination. Let us then attend to the facts in question.

In the first place, what is the origin of modern revivals? They originated with John Wesley and George Whitefield, the founders of the Methodist denomination. These distinguished men began their ministry in England at a period of great moral apathy, and religious indifference, and even gross immorality. They adopted an earnest, direct, familiar, pungent and impassioned style of preaching. They usually addressed the less informed and more depraved classes of society. Their intelligible, powerful and heart-rending appeals produced a most astonishing and wonderful excitement of the passions and feelings. They were at first greatly pleased with the striking results of their labors, and readily ascribed them to the special operations of the holy spirit. But more experience convinced them of the deceptive character of such promising appearances, and led them to doubt the expediency of such commotions. For they early discovered that it was much easier for their converts to relate marvellous experiences, than to exhibit christian dispositions and characters.

I have said that modern revivals originated with the founders of Methodism. I cheerfully admit, that religious excitements existed before their day among the Anabaptists, Quakers, and various other sects. But you will not pronounce their disgusting extravagances to be genuine revivals of religion. I also admit that seasons of uncommon attention to religion had occasionally been experienced in the calvinistic churches both in Europe and America before this period. But you find no traces of anything like our present delusions in any of the reformed denominations. So that we may justly consider Wesley and Whitefield

the authors of modern revivals. Their followers in this country have generally aimed to imitate the example of their leaders. Most of the Methodist preachers in America have taken unwearied pains to produce similar excitements; and they have labored with very considerable success among the more ignorant and more excitable members of our community. Now you should remember, that there is a diversity of religious opinions among the professors of this pious sect. Nearly all in this country embrace arminian views of the gospel, and are the disciples of Wesley. The larger portion of those in England receive the five points of Calvinism, and are the followers of Whitefield. Not a few both in England and America have been led by a prayerful perusal of the scriptures to embrace Unitarianism. Read Ashworth's most interesting account of the rise and progress of the Unitarian doctrine among the Methodists of Rochdale, Newchurch, and other places. Notwithstanding this diversity of views, these revivals are principally confined to the arminian Methodists of America.

2. In the second place, what is the fact in relation to the Calvinistic denomination? When Whitefield first visited this part of our country, such revivals were scarcely known to the descendants of the pilgrims. Some of the orthodox clergy and laity cordially united in his new measures for their production; and they succeeded in raising such a tempest and whirlwind of passion, contention, reviling and wickedness as never before desolated the New England churches. Others of the orthodox clergy and laity, equally learned, zealous and pious, openly opposed the operation of this human machinery; and for their conscientious adherence to the rules of good order and gospel institutions, were denounced as the enemies of Christ and God. Even Whitefield declared that the president of Yale College had no more grace in his heart than the chair over which he leaned when offering his prayers

Since that memorable period, a portion of the Calvinists of our land have favored such excitements, and made them the special objects of their prayers and exertions. A minority have never been convinced of their divine origin and beneficial tendency ; and have accordingly observed a respectful silence on the subject, or manfully opposed their prevalence. At this moment, you find several individuals of distinction raising their voices against the unscriptural measures adopted for their production. Among the Calvinists of Europe, such revivals have been comparatively unknown. Those in England are striving at this very time to bring them into existence. They have been excited to this undertaking by the flattering, partial, and, as I believe, *deceptive* accounts, of what was taking place in the American churches. They have been led to believe in their practicability, usefulness and divine origin ; and have accordingly put in operation some of the machinery necessary for their production. As yet little or no success has attended their exertions. So that it is but a few years since such revivals were introduced into your denomination ; and they have never been fostered but by a minority of the whole Calvinistic body. You will also remember that important divisions are now taking place among the adherents of orthodoxy throughout the world. The greater portion in Germany have embraced universal salvation. The most distinguished minister of the party in England, Dr J. P. Smith, has adopted views of the inspiration of scriptures nearly accordant with those embraced by Unitarians, and has even denied Solomon's Song to be any part of the book of revelation. In this country, warm disputes exist on several topics, such as the eternal generation of the Son, the atonement, the depravity of man, and regeneration ; so that what is orthodoxy at Princeton is denounced as heresy at Andover. But nearly all the leaders in America are now uniting their forces to crush Unitarianism by the production of these religious excite-

ments. Even Dr Taylor, of New Haven, who considered himself so severely abused by Dr Woods, of Andover, has not hesitated to visit Boston, and to engage earnestly in this holy warfare.

3. In the third place, what is the fact in relation to the Episcopal denomination? Its members very generally disapprove of these excitements. When they have raged in their immediate neighborhoods, they have successfully labored in checking their progress and influence. One of the American bishops, not long since, denounced them as injurious to the cause of pure religion, and exhorted his clergy to oppose their prevalence. And at this very moment, the editors of their leading journals are raising their voice against such delusions. Take the following sentences from the Philadelphia and Hartford periodical publications. 'There are some kinds of religious excitement, created by mechanical operations, existing through animal effervescence, and leading to much irregularity, which we are happy to know are not very frequent in the Episcopal church, and are not encouraged by Episcopalians in general, because they are not persuaded of their being in any good degree conducive to true charity or real godliness. They cannot see in them those fruits of faith and piety, which ripen unto eternal life. The bonds of christian charity are all rent asunder, the meekness and humility of the gospel contemned, the regular ministers of Christ after a season shunned and despised, and self-conceit, spiritual pride, and self-righteousness permitted an unlimited and unyielding ascendancy.' This will suffice for the present. A few, however, of both clergy and laity among the Episcopalians entertain different opinions on this subject, and have occasionally united with the revivalists of other sects in the production of these excitements. Now you are aware that there is a great diversity of religious opinions in this denomination. The larger portion of both clergy and laity give an Arminian interpretation to the thirty-nine articles. A re-

spectable minority, especially in England, give them a Calvinistic meaning. Many who still remain within the bosom of this church have fully embraced Unitarian sentiments. Some whole societies have adopted an expurgated liturgy. And you must also remember that our pilgrim fathers professed fully to believe in the thirty-nine articles, and found no fault with this formulary of faith. Listen to the following words of Dr Increase Mather. 'The churches here were planted a noble vine. Indeed, it *was not with respect to the fundamentals in doctrine*, that our fathers came into this wilderness. For they agreed to the doctrinal articles of the church of England as fully as any, and more fully than many of the conformists of that church.' But with all their present diversity of sentiment, the Episcopalians are almost uniformly opposed to modern revivals.

4. In the fourth place, what is the fact in relation to the Baptist denomination? In our own country, most of its members favor such religious excitements; but in England, even to the present time, such revivals have scarcely had an existence among the believers in immersion. In this sect there is likewise a great diversity of religious sentiment. Take all into the account who are called Baptists, and you will probably find a majority who still adhere to Calvinism. But the number who have embraced Arminian views is exceedingly large and very respectable, especially in our Western States; and they usually meet with much greater success in producing these excitements than their Calvinistic brethren. Another very large body have renounced human creeds and the peculiarities of orthodoxy, but still hold to immersion and retain the name of Christian Baptists. Alexander Campbell, who had the controversy with Robert Owen in Cincinnati, is the head of this most respectable class. From him I learned the nature of their belief, which is decidedly anti-trinitarian and anti-calvinistic; and also the probable amount of their professors, which is very large. Most of this party pro-

duce these revivals; and even one of their preachers, baptized several hundred converts, the fruits of his own preaching, within one year. In England, the denomination is divided into particular, or close communion Baptists, and general, or open communicants. The latter division, has, to a very considerable extent, embraced Unitarianism. But neither section favor these religious excitements. So that, upon the whole, the liberal baptists far exceed their orthodox brethren in the frequency and extent of their revivals.

5. In the fifth place, what is the fact in relation to the Congregational Unitarian denomination? Some of its preachers have formerly believed such excitements beneficial under certain restrictions. They have accordingly adopted the necessary measures for their production. Their exertions have been crowned with ample success. Without advancing one word of Calvinism, they have succeeded in producing very extensive revivals. They have managed them with so much prudence and resolution as to avoid the most serious evils which are their common attendants; and in this way have received large accessions to their churches. I could refer you to names and dates in proof of this statement. It will however be sufficient to name the late Rev. Abiel Abbot, of Beverly, who had two such excitements during his ministry, and from whom I received a full account of all the measures adopted for their production and regulation. I ought also to add that his experience in these convinced him of their evil tendency. But far the largest portion of this denomination has ever opposed these extravagances on principle; and at this moment I know scarcely an individual who would stand forth in their defence. I will not however speak for others; but for my own part, I must affirm, that I consider all such commotions as the natural result of human machinery. I have conscientiously raised my voice against their prevalence. And when they have been raging in our immediate vicinity,

we have successfully endeavored to preserve our hearers from their baneful influence ; and the consequence has usually been, that our numbers have increased rather than diminished.

6. In the sixth place, what is the fact in relation to the *Christian* denomination ? Most of its members are favorable to such excitements. They have been greatly indebted to them for the rapid and extensive spread of their peculiar sentiments. Within thirty years, they have established more than one thousand flourishing churches in the United States. They have drawn largely from the Calvinists, the Methodists, the Baptists ; and their increase has been essentially aided by their frequent and extensive revivals. In fact, no denomination has produced them so frequently as the Christians, according to their respective numbers. And what are their distinguishing articles of faith ? They have authorized one of their elders to publish a history of their origin, progress, opinions and numbers ; and from this official document, you learn that they receive the Bible alone as their standard of faith and practice, and pay no allegiance to human creeds or fallible masters ; that they uniformly reject the doctrine of the trinity, and the five points of Calvinism, and that they have almost universally embraced Unitarian views of the scriptures. And while preaching these sentiments fully and distinctly, they are almost daily extending their borders, and planting new and respectable churches. I noticed not long since, that one of their preachers had converted and immersed from three to four hundred persons in one year, in the Western States. During my visit among them, I always found them distinguished for good morals and practical piety, although much persecuted and defamed by their orthodox brethren.

Now, sir, you will not I presume question the general correctness of this statement. And what do such facts prove ? The five following propositions : 1. That your assertion is altogether untrue. 2. That these revivals

do not depend on the peculiar religious sentiments of any christian denomination. 3. That those ministers, who think such revivals favorable, either to the growth of religion, or the increase of their party, adopt the necessary measures for their production ; and that sooner or later these exertions are crowned with a greater or less degree of success, be their creed heterodox or orthodox. 4. That those preachers who believe these excitements to be unscriptural and of injurious tendency, not only cease from using any means for their existence, but adopt the necessary measures for preventing their spread among their hearers ; and that their labors are also equally successful, be their creed orthodox or heterodox. 5. That no sentiments are so well calculated for the promotion of these revivals as those embraced by Unitarians ; for no sect meets with so much success in getting them up as the Unitarian Christians and Baptists. In short, it is perfectly evident that any minister who is so disposed, may produce one of your religious excitements. I hope, therefore, you will correct the wrong impressions which your assertions have left on the minds of less informed hearers.

II. You assert that orthodox revivals are produced by scriptural means and measures. I think a plain statement of facts will prove your assertion untrue ; and also convince you that most of the methods adopted for their production are unchristian. Let us then attend to the facts in question.

1. What is the first step to be taken in getting up an orthodox revival? *Prayer meetings.* Your leaders become alarmed for the safety of their peculiar sentiments. They lament the rapid and extensive spread of liberal views. In order to preserve and perpetuate a belief in human formularies, they determine to promote a religious excitement. They enlist the feelings and services of the more zealous, excitable, and officious church members. They commence operations

by establishing frequent prayer meetings. You hold them at an early hour in the morning; you continue them to an unreasonable hour in the evening, and you appoint them for almost every day in the week. When assembled, you implore the special outpouring of the holy spirit; and you would have the ignorant believe, that a supernatural influence is actually exerted on the hearts of both saints and sinners, by which the former are revived and the latter converted. You have several prayers at each meeting, and several meetings each week, and the constant burden of your unceasing petition is uniformly the same; the special influences of the Almighty. You approach the throne of grace without respect or reverence, and talk to the eternal Jehovah as if he were your equal, and pledged to aid your party movements, and you narrate events of recent occurrence, and circumstances of present existence, as if he were ignorant of human transactions, and could receive directions from his sinful creatures. Your familiarity is disgusting to the most common and shocking to the most pious. You sometimes go so far as to call the names of individuals, families and denominations; and denounce those who dissent from your doctrinal belief as infidels, emissaries of satan, and enemies to all holiness. You even beseech the Lord to send trouble, anguish and affliction into their dwellings, and to shake them over the pit of hell. Your feelings become gradually excited through the influence of sympathy and combined exertion. You readily attribute this natural result of your belief and operations, to the supernatural influence of God Almighty. You profess to believe, and endeavor to make others believe, that this animal excitement is the special and immediate answer to your devotions.

Now can you call this first step for the promotion of a revival a scriptural measure? Will you pretend that such meetings, so often, for such objects, and so conducted, are authorized by the instructions or example

of any inspired teacher. Are they not virtually condemned by the preaching and practice of our Saviour? Look at the history of his life, and explain his sayings by the rules of consistent interpretation. Did he not severely censure the Pharisees for their long, and ostentatious prayers? Did he not solemnly admonish his disciples to avoid the vain repetition of the heathen? Did he not assure them that they were not heard for their much speaking; and that their wants were known to their Heavenly Father before their devotions ascended? Did he not furnish them with a form of prayer; short, comprehensive, charitable and dignified? Did he not declare that their Heavenly Father was more ready to give them his holy spirit, in his own manner, than earthly parents are to give good gifts to their children? Did he not compare the influence of the divine spirit to the blowing of the wind, and thus instruct them that the time and manner of its operation could not be discerned? In short, can you point to a passage in the whole Bible, in which Jesus ever authorized the appointment of frequent prayer meetings? ever directed christians to pray for the *special* outpourings of the holy spirit? ever allowed an almost endless succession of repetitions in devotional exercises? ever taught any one to address the Deity with shocking familiarity or irreverent indecency? ever permitted his followers to denounce their brethren and pronounce judgment on their hearts and characters? ever instructed us to expect immediate and supernatural answers to our prayers? or ever encouraged us to make a distinction between the operations of the spirit and the results of our own thoughts and feelings? In saying this, I do not mean to condemn meetings for social worship, when convened at proper seasons, and conducted in a proper manner. I do not intend to condemn petitions for the influences of the holy spirit, but merely to prove that we have no authority from scripture to ask or expect anything *special*, or as this word is understood, *miraculous*. With these qualifica-

tions, I think it must be evident to all, that your first measure is unscriptural.

2. What is the second step to be taken in getting up an orthodox revival. *Visiting from house to house.* The promoters of the excitement sometimes district a village or town, and assign to each individual his share of the barren vineyard. More commonly the minister takes this labor wholly on his own shoulders, in connexion with some clerical assistants. They enter a house, and assemble its inmates. They make known the object of their visit, and either ask liberty or take liberty, to make a prayer. They inform the Almighty, that more or less of the present company are still in the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity; and they ask for the supernatural influences of his spirit to convert them from nature to grace. They then utter many sentiments which are calculated to operate on the feelings of the hearers, and advance many opinions which would be considered uncivil in conversation. This misnamed prayer, you follow with a series of exhortations and denunciations. You frequently assume an authoritative and dictatorial style of address. You often manifest an uncharitable and self-righteous temper. You seem to regard all who will not pronounce your shibboleth, both old and young, as so many totally depraved wretches on the very brink of perdition. You threaten them over and over again with all the plagues of this world, and all the miseries of hell, unless they repent immediately. You sometimes take the young females by the hand, and allow them a certain number of minutes to determine whether they will be saved or damned. You are very careful to visit those families in which the male members are opposed to your operations, in the absence of husband, father, or brother; for you fear their presence and influence. In all this process, you design to frighten the weak, the timid, the young and the ignorant. In many families you meet with considerable success, and are instrumental in creating alarm, terror,

discord, reviling and hatred in once peaceful and united households. When your church members are sent around on this errand, it occasionally happens, that the ignorant, and perhaps suspected zealot, thus insults his more virtuous and pious neighbors. In this way the excitement is rendered more powerful and extensive.

Now can you call this second step for the promotion of a revival a scriptural measure? Will you pretend that this kind of visiting, and praying, and frightening was ever adopted by any inspired teacher? Is not the whole process virtually condemned by the example and instructions of our Saviour and his apostles? Did the heavenly Jesus ever district the city of Jerusalem, and send his apostles to visit every individual and family? Did he ever ask the members of a household for liberty to pray in their presence; or ever proceed to offer up devotions against their consent; or ever denounce them as unconverted in his addresses to his heavenly Father? Did he ever say to the fearful and distrusting, that endless torments must be their portion unless they repented within a given number of minutes? Did he ever conduct unkindly, or uncivilly, or impolitely towards an individual or family? Did he send his apostles abroad to create terror, dismay, and excitement? Did he not charge them to say—peace be within this dwelling, whenever they entered a house? On the other hand, did he not level most of his denunciations against the loud professing, over zealous, madly proselyting Pharisees? Did he not censure them for their disfigured faces, their ostentatious prayers and alms-givings, their neglect of the weightier matters of the law, and their spiritual pride and self righteousness. Did not the apostles severely reprove those who went creeping from house to house to lead captive silly women? Did they not command those to be marked and avoided who caused divisions in families, neighborhoods and societies? Did they not rank busy-bodies in other people's con-

cerns, among the most depraved and wicked? In these remarks, I would not be understood as disapproving pastoral visits; but you well know that pastoral visits and revival visits are as opposite as light and darkness. And I think every man must see that this latter practice is altogether unscriptural.

3. What is the third step to be taken in getting up an orthodox revival? *Multiplied meetings for exhortation.* You have lately held three or four long services on the sabbath, and three or four more on each of four days in the week. You entreat all your society to attend, and bring with them as many of their friends and acquaintances as can possibly be urged to accompany them. You suppose that those members of Unitarian parishes who have never witnessed your revival measures, may be more easily excited than those of your own hearers who have been accustomed to such influences? You invite from abroad those preachers who have acquired some celebrity in creating an excitement, and who are well calculated to arouse the feelings and passions, by their appearance, voice and gestures; by their bold declamation and reckless denunciation; by their exaggerated statements and frightful descriptions. Your discourses are characterized by extravagance. You represent the Supreme Being as an inexorable Judge, glowing with the flames of wrath and anger, determined to wreak his vengeance on all of his dependent creatures who will not bow to his sceptre. You paint the depravity of man in colors as dark as the blackness of hell; and to the infernal regions you must resort to find any living resemblance to your picture. You describe the torments of the damned, by images at once disgusting, shocking, and terrific; and pronounce them both unutterably excruciating in degree, and endless in duration. From almost every page of your harangue, the flashes of a material hell are constantly bursting, and the suffocating smoke of burning brimstone continually ascending. By way of

contrast, you depict the joys of the redeemed in the glowing language of poetic fiction. But this is not all. You introduce accounts of what had occurred in other societies and distant places; and relate doubtful stories of the most alarming character. You tell of one opposer of your excitements who has been deprived of his reason by the miraculous interposition of Deity on account of his opposition. You tell of a young female who lately died a most excruciating and wretched death, because she had forsaken inquiry meetings. You mention the remarkable conversions of persons of the least civil or military note, in order to prove that the revival may extend beyond weak women and still weaker men. You endeavor to impress the conviction that the Lord is present in a special manner, that he cannot be expected to remain long, and that many of your hearers will be dead before his return. And you conclude your exhortation by assuring all present, that some of their number will die before morning; that this is their last opportunity to get religion; and that unless they improve the passing moment, the morrow's light will find them weeping and wailing among the damned souls of the infernal world. You then have your anxious seats, or your trap doors to a room beneath, where the frightened are collected, and subjected to a new and equally unchristian process. Time would fail me to record all the fanatical extravagances of such meetings.

And can you call this third step for the promotion of a revival a scriptural measure? Will you pretend that the gospel furnishes any authority for such proceedings? Did our Saviour ever appoint three or four meetings on the sabbath, or a dozen or twenty during a week? Did he ever send for others to help him produce an excitement? Did his revival discourses bear the least resemblance to those of modern days? Read again his sermon on the mount, and every exhortation he deliv-

ered ; and if you are not willing to confess that his preaching condemns yours, I shall begin to think you absolutely blinded. When Paul first preached the gospel at Antioch, why did he wait from one sabbath till the next, before he completed his message ? Why did he not call the people together during the week, and hold four-day meetings ? Had he no love for their souls ? Or did he not understand how to get up a revival ? And where in the whole compass of revelation, can you find any model for your representations of God and his government ; of the nature and means of conversion ; of the depravity and inability of mankind ; of the regions of hell and heaven ! Nay, where can you find any such specimens of religious extravagance and fanaticism, not to say falsehood and madness ?

4. What is the fourth step to be taken in getting up an orthodox revival ? *Whispering meetings.* Those disposed to favor the excitement assemble of an evening in a dimly lighted apartment. Much the larger portion of the company are females. Either the minister or some male assistant passes around the room, and whispers something into the ear of every individual. He generally repeats some striking passage of scripture, or gives some solemn admonition, or utters some awakening truth, or puts some startling question, or pronounces some unauthorized assertion. By the stillness and deathlike silence of the scene ; by the ghastly appearance of every countenance on which the dying light casts its paleness ; by a sudden change in the train of thought or state of feeling, he hopes to excite a high degree of terror and agitation. For when the timid subject is thoroughly frightened, she can be moulded at pleasure ; she can be induced to make any acknowledgements, and sign any confessions and give her assent to any creed, and adopt any party measures. The whole process reminds one most forcibly of the modes of operation upon those suspected of witchcraft in the time of our fathers.

Now can you call this fourth step for the promotion of a revival, a scriptural measure? Is it authorized by either the precept or example of any inspired teacher? For a moment imagine the lowly Jesus at such a meeting. Behold him enter a dimly lighted hall, filled mostly with anxious and gloomy females. See him whisper something to each attentive listener as he passes around the chamber. Even the supposition of such a case is enough to shock every serious mind, destroy all worthy conceptions of our Saviour's dignity and delicacy, and stamp with reprobation every such proceeding. Can there be found a female of any refinement, of any sense of propriety, of any true modesty, of any christian humility, who would submit to such inquirers? Can there be found a husband who would willingly permit his beloved wife to pass through such an ungodly ordeal? Can there be found a father of any pretensions to civilization, who would knowingly expose a daughter to the operation of this device of bigotry and fanaticism? But I may not put you to the blush by asking further questions. The recollection of your Saviour's conduct must convince you of the unscriptural character of this measure.

5. What is the fifth step to be taken in getting up an orthodox revival? *Inquiry meetings*. When the unconverted have become so much terrified, as to confess themselves totally depraved, haters of their heavenly Father, and enemies to all goodness, they assemble on the appointed evening to inquire either of the minister or some church member what they must do to be saved. None are admitted but those who feel anxious for the salvation of their souls; for the conversation of others might savor too much of common sense. No discussion of disputed questions is allowed; for this practice might leave too much liberty to the understanding. The inquirers have but little to say, except to answer the questions of their leaders. And it frequently

happens that they are led to make very amusing and ludicrous replies. They are often assured that their convictions of sin are not sufficiently deep and pungent; that they must have some experimental acquaintance with the torments of the reprobate, and that they must even feel desirous of dethroning the Almighty. They are sometimes assured that they must feel willing to be damned, before they can be saved; that they can of themselves do nothing to effect their own conversion, and that even their prayers are an abomination to the Lord. They are likewise assured that they must cordially receive the doctrines of grace, or the human articles of orthodoxy; that this is a necessary evidence of the humility of their stubborn hearts, and that all inquiry and examination are out of the question when the spirit is in operation. In short, their reason and understanding are surrendered to the dictation of the minister and his assistants; and they readily embrace whatever opinions are prescribed for their special benefit, whether they relate to doctrines, practice, or other denominations.

Now can you call this fifth step for the promotion of a revival a scriptural measure? Is it authorized by either the teachings or doings of any inspired instructor? There was a most urgent necessity for persons to inquire of our Saviour the way of salvation. They had no written gospel. Not only so; when sinners came for information on this infinitely important question, what was his answer? Keep the commandments. There was no delay; nothing said about the nature and depth of their convictions; nothing about the doctrines of a trinity, an atonement, total depravity, and a calvinistic hell; nothing about human inability and special influences, and nothing about dreams, and visions, and experiences. No: the answer was plain and simple; so plain that the wayfaring man, though a fool, could not mistake. And what did the inspired apostles

say to those who inquired of them the way of salvation? The same thing in reality. Reform. Turn from your evil ways to the practice of holiness. Believe on the Lord Jesus. Prove the sincerity of your faith by obedience to his authority. Now the case is very different. We have the scriptures in our own language. We have the very answers of Jesus and his apostles. We can all read and understand for ourselves; for we have received the rudiments of our Christian education. There is no necessity for such proceedings. It is indeed quite another thing to inquire into the meaning of difficult passages of holy writ. This may be rendered a useful and necessary exercise; and it may also be proper, pleasant, and beneficial to meet for religious conversation. But to surrender ourselves into the hands of ministers or deacons on this momentous subject, is slighting the blessed gospel, is giving up our religious liberty, is putting our trust in fallible mortals, is degrading our very character, and is virtually forbidden by the whole history of our Saviour's life.

6. Such are some of the common measures for the production of orthodox revivals. Several others of a more dangerous character have been invented and put in operation in New York; but not generally approved in New England. I shall not describe the means used in colleges for the creation of such excitements. I have received a very full and satisfactory account of all the arts and contrivances adopted in one such institution, from a gentleman who took a most active part in originating and promoting the commotion. Should the cause require it, this shall be made the basis of a separate publication. But one idea presses most forcibly on my mind, when I hear the boasting of your leaders concerning college revivals. Why have you not succeeded in getting up an excitement in Cambridge, if it is the special work of the Almighty? It is now several years since it was proposed among you to devote one hour,

each week, for this object. The proposal was extensively adopted. And is not the total failure of all your efforts ; of all your stated devotions, expressly uttered for this purpose. And this is a conclusive proof that the excitements in other colleges are produced by the agency of human beings.

Now look at the common measures for getting up orthodox revivals. Are they scriptural? No. This you will not even pretend, after our present examination. Very well. Did not our heavenly Father understand the nature, depravity and danger of sinners when he caused the gospel to be published? Did he not know what measures were best adapted to bring them to repentance, conversion, regeneration, reformation? If you say he did not know, then you make him an ignorant and imperfect being ; but if you say he did know these things, then you admit that your revival measures have not his sanction. Not only so. Did not our Saviour know what was in man? Did he not love the souls of dying sinners as well, to say the least, as modern orthodox preachers? Did he not know, as well as they, to what present and future dangers the disobedient are continually exposed? Did he not know as well as they, what means were best calculated to promote the spread and influence of his own religion? If you say he did not know these things, you accuse him of ignorance and deception on the very business of his divine mission. If you say, that your revival machinery are improvements upon our Saviour's modes of operation, you charge him with want of qualifications for his office as Messiah and Saviour. If you admit that he did know all these things, then you must acknowledge that the measures of modern revivalists are unscriptural, and ought to be banished from the christian world. Take which horn of the dilemma you please.

III. You assert that orthodox revivals produce the

genuine fruits of the gospel. I think a plain statement of facts will prove your assertion untrue; and also convince you, that the principal effects of such excitements are unchristian.

1. In the first place, your revivals create disgust and infidelity. Look into your societies. No small number of your more respectable and intelligent members are completely disgusted with your proceedings. They regard your measures as sectarian and fanatical. They have lost all confidence in the good sense and sound judgment of your lay and clerical leaders. They do not hesitate openly and loudly to express their dissatisfaction. Were this all, I should not so much regret the effect; for I believe the present excitement may be instrumental of leading them to a study of the scriptures, and converting them to more liberal views of the gospel. But another class are driven by your extravagances into open infidelity. They cannot believe that a system of religion, which requires such worldly policy and artful manœuvring and gross improprieties, for its support and propagation, can proceed from the fountain of heavenly wisdom. They do not distinguish between the corruptions of the gospel, and the gospel itself; nor between the abuses of overheated and misguided zealots, and the undisputed blessings of christianity. They accordingly array themselves against religion itself, and regard most of its votaries as enthusiasts, fools or hypocrites. Yes; the notorious female apostle of infidelity has herself assured us, that she was induced to enter upon her present desolating mission, wholly from witnessing the blasting and ravaging evils of one of your revivals; and to this cause alone, is to be traced her zeal and perseverance in the service of irreligion and atheism.

And is all this christian fruit? Is this the natural consequence of a revival of pure religion in a christian land? By no means. Is there anything in the gospel itself to produce such pernicious results? No. The

rational, purifying, ennobling, exalting system of Jesus is directly calculated to secure the assent, the approbation, the hearty belief, the cordial co-operation of all candid and worthy citizens. Did the Author and Finisher of our faith, or his Apostles, ever adopt any measures for the propagation of christianity, which were calculated to produce such lamentable effects? No. They always appealed to the reason and conscience of their hearers, were always open and honest in all their movements, and uniformly manifested lovely dispositions and upright characters. O how did their modes of operation differ, while spreading the glad tidings of peace and salvation among the unbelieving, and inimical Jews and Gentiles, from those now adopted by your ministers, while endeavoring to convert to orthodoxy those whose belief in the gospel is unwavering, and whose morals are unimpeachable! And is not the influence of those, you are driving from Christ and from hope, wanted on the side of good order and uncorrupted religion? Yes; and for this disgust and infidelity, created by your unscriptural excitements, you are accountable. For this unnecessary offence to the cause of truth, you incur a fearful weight of responsibility. As a dying man, as a friend to the best interests of society, I beseech you to abstain from thus wounding our common master in the house of his followers.

2. In the second place, your revivals create divisions and dissensions. They enter united families, neighborhoods, and societies. Yes; your excitements enter families. Husbands and wives are driven to different places of worship. The bonds of early and long cherished friendship are burst asunder. All community of feeling and interest and sympathy is destroyed. Those hearts which should have been filled with tender and indissoluble affection are swelled with a fearful pity for each others frailty. The children take sides with one or the other of the parents. Their young bosoms are

excited with bitterness towards each other. The words of reproof and condemnation fall from their agitated and quivering lips. Domestic harmony is disturbed; and home is no longer the abode of parental tenderness, filial piety, rational enjoyment, and mutual improvement. Your excitements also enter neighborhoods. Long tried friends are separated. Social intercourse is interrupted. Acquaintances meet without the accustomed salutation, or pass each other either with averted looks, or a self-righteous or sneering demeanor. The surrounding atmosphere is surcharged with tattlings, backbitings, envyings, and all manner of evil speaking. Your revivals likewise enter churches and societies. Those who had often walked to the house of God together, and communed at the same table, are widely estranged from each other; and they are led to believe, that they can no longer worship and commune in the same place, although all adhere to the same orthodox doctrines. Several such cases are within your own knowledge. Even those professing godliness are excited to denounce each other as unconverted, dishonest and wicked, notwithstanding their agreement on doctrinal sentiments. And not unfrequently new societies of different religious opinions are compelled by the denunciations of your leaders to organize themselves for the support of separate worship and instruction.

And is all this christian fruit? Is this the natural consequence of a revival of pure religion in a christian community? By no means. When the gospel was first promulgated, it did indeed set the father against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother-in-law against the daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. For, on the one side, were the unbelieving, self-righteous, persecuting Jews, or the bigoted, superstitious, uncharitable heathen; and on the other side, were the converts to

the new religion, meek, peaceable, forbearing, forgiving and unresisting. Now the case is entirely different. Your revivals produce opposition and enmities among believers themselves. On the one hand, are the newly revived, or newly converted, too often manifesting the spirit, and imitating the conduct of the ancient unbelievers; and on the other hand, are those whom you denounce as totally depraved, wholly averse to all good, wholly inclined to all evil, very frequently exhibiting the disposition and character of the early christians. No doubt there are faults on all sides; but wo to those by whom the offence cometh. Paul condemns his Corinthian converts as *carnal*, because they had divisions among themselves, which were not the natural fruit of his religion. And I have no hesitation in applying the same epithet to those, who are now spreading the same blighting and soul-withering evils, by their injurious and unscriptural measures and exertions to swell the number of their adherents. As a friend to domestic comfort, to refined and elevated society, to christian order and institutions, I do beseech you to abstain from sowing the fruitful seeds of disorganization and wretchedness.

3. In the third place, your revivals create a neglect of important duties. Should one occur in the spring, the appropriate labors of the season are either omitted or imperfectly executed. Produce one in autumn, harvest is either injured or ruined for want of care and attention. At whatever period you get them up, whether in the city or country, many necessary domestic duties are either greatly slighted or wholly neglected. The wants and instruction of children are disregarded; and their lives are sometimes exposed by being left destitute of proper protection. A thousand little nameless services, which are absolutely essential to the well being, harmony, comfort and improvement of the family circle are entirely overlooked. O how many complaints of this nature have come to my knowledge!

And what are your leaders now doing? You are holding four day meetings, both in Boston and throughout the country; and you are extending them from one week to another, until you have nearly completed a whole month. Now can you suppose that those who attend from early morn to late at night, neglect no important duties? Were those hours formerly given to idleness, amusement, or unnecessary labors, which are now devoted to religious dissipation? Does their wealth justify them in leaving the daily cares of life to the management of hirelings? Go into their houses, stores, shops, and fields, and you will witness a sinful neglect of commanded duties.

And is all this christian fruit? Is this the natural consequence of a revival of pure religion in a christian commonwealth? By no means. If you neglect any incumbent duties for these services of human invention, are you not guilty in the sight of your heavenly Father? Has he not expressly commanded you to labor six days and do all your work. Are you not divinely instructed that He prefers mercy to sacrifice; a merciful act done towards man, in preference to worship offered to himself? And are there none among you who are in want of your charitable assistance; in want of food, and clothing, and employment, and books, and schools, and moral and religious instruction? Has not an apostle informed you, that those who neglect to provide for their own households, have denied the christian faith, and are worse than infidels? And are none of you neglecting to provide those things which are necessary for the peace, comfort, convenience, harmony and improvement of your connexions while attending public meetings, morning, noon and night; Tuesday and Wednesday, Thursday and Friday; the second, third, and even fourth week of the month? Has not Jesus plainly shown you, that his religion consists in faithfully performing all incumbent duties in their proper manner, proper time, and proper place?

Did he ever leave the service of mankind to preach, or sing, or pray, or exhort. Look well to his example. Has he anywhere given you leave to omit a single necessary duty for the services of man's invention? Will the performance of an uncommanded act, though good in itself, ever atone for the neglect of commanded and important duties? I put the question to your conscience, in the name of order and prosperity. I do beseech you to abstain from holding out encouragement to idleness, negligence and dissipation.

4. In the fourth place, your revivals increase the depravity of many who are exposed to their influence. One class become greatly alarmed, experience most pungent convictions, make no small noise about their hell-deserving souls, shake off their unnatural gloom and depression, are brought out most triumphantly, exhort others to embrace religion, condemn older and better christians than themselves, and set up for remarkable instances of converting grace. But within a short period, their unnatural excitement and elevation pass away, leaving them with the same nature, the same dispositions, the same propensities, the same characters as they possessed before their supposed regeneration. They immediately conclude that there is no reality whatever in religion itself; that those who keep up the appearances of piety, are mere hypocrites, and that the whole affair is an artful contrivance of priestcraft. They seem impelled by their past experience to banish all thoughts of God and duty from their minds, to give loose reins to their appetites and passions, and to plunge into the very depths of dissipation and infidelity. O how many could I name within the circle of my acquaintance who have been thus ruined as to all temporal and spiritual prospects. Another class pass through the same process in a similar manner, submit to an examination of the church committee, give a satisfactory relation of their experiences, are saved up till a sufficient number is secured to make a display at the sea-

son of admission to the company of saints, and for a season manifest great zeal and engagedness in the cause of orthodoxy. After a little time, however, they relax in their duties, and become suspected of being spurious converts. Some of them are disciplined for the grossest immoralities. I need not leave this village for examples of those, whose conversions have been loudly trumpeted, and who have exhibited great earnestness in denouncing unitarians, but who have since been censured and punished for such crimes as stealing and drunkenness. Others may be found in many of your communions who do no credit to their profession, and who manifest more of the temper of the world, than of the spirit of Christ. This you well know; and you will not think me uncharitable in mentioning the fact, since these very converts are so ready to condemn their more liberal as well as more christian brethren.

And is all this christian fruit? Is this the natural consequence of a revival of pure religion in this moral community? By no means. Does not this statement forcibly remind you of certain denunciations of our Saviour? Did he not severely censure the loud professing pharisees for their extravagant exertions to secure adherents to their party? Did he not affirm that they compassed sea and land to make one proselyte, and that when their object was accomplished, he was ten fold more the child of hell than before his conversion? Ought not the striking similarity of the two cases to lead you to consideration. And I beseech you, as you value the most cherished wishes of the parental bosom, as you value the purity and prosperity of the christian church, as you value the permanency of our free institutions, as you value the precept and example and sufferings of an ascended Saviour; as you value the salvation of immortal souls, I entreat you to abstain from those measures which may lead to the corruption of our youth, and the ruin of our holy religion.

5. In the fifth place, your revivals diminish the good-

ness and increase the wickedness of many converts. I now allude to some of those whom you regard as worthy members of your communion, and whom you consider among the genuine fruits of your excitements. I grant that they perform some duties which were before neglected ; such perhaps as private and social devotion, examination of the scriptures, and attendance upon gospel ordinances. But I know they omit some duties which were before practised, and commit some sins which were before avoided. Yes ; they are less loving, confiding and attentive as wives or husbands ; less affectionate and obedient as sons or daughters ; less kind and obliging as brothers or sisters ; less generous and benevolent as friends or neighbors ; less amiable, cheerful and instructive as companions or acquaintances ; less devoted to intellectual and mutual improvement as citizens and countrymen. On the other hand, they are more unhappy in their tempers ; more fretful in their dispositions ; more gloomy in their spirits ; more uncharitable towards those who dissent from their creed ; more censorious of other christians ; more vain and self-righteous ; more proud and revengeful. I am sorry to name these things ; but I know them to be truths. How many could I mention, how very many, whose characters have been thus affected by their conversion to orthodoxy, and their subjection to orthodox influences and management. You also know that my statements are literally true ; and you will probably defend the conduct of these individuals. You will say that these dispositions and practices are the natural result of their principles, the inevitable consequences of their sentiments ; and that they could not have their liberty, and do otherwise.

And is all this christian fruit ? Is this the natural consequence of a pure revival of religion in a christian church ? By no means. If these converts have been half as depraved as they pretend, they should humble themselves in dust and ashes, and not suffer themselves

to be puffed up with spiritual pride. If they have been wholly converted by the special influences of the spirit, as they affirm, they should never blame others for continuing in a state of nature ; for in this case the reproach attaches to the Deity instead of the sinner. If they have now for the first time become enlightened, so as to comprehend the truths of the gospel, as they declare, they should be zealously engaged in searching the scriptures, and not in condemning as heretics and infidels those christians who have much more religious knowledge than themselves. If they would induce others to embrace religion, they should exhibit its good influences on themselves, by manifesting more purity of mind and heart, more amiableness and gentleness of temper, more kindness and benevolence of disposition, more cheerfulness and resignation of soul, more virtue and holiness of conduct, and more of christian goodness of character. For every diminution in anything true, honest, just, pure, lovely, or of good report, will assuredly be noticed and condemned ; and every increase in anything sour, morose, unkind, peevish, bigotted, uncharitable and persecuting will also be considered irreligious and unchristian. As a member of the church of Christ, I do therefore beseech you to abstain from filling up our communions with those who disgrace their profession, and surrounding the Lord's table with unlovely and unworthy guests.

6. In the sixth place, your revivals discourage all free inquiry in matters of religion. Review the whole process. The fears, feelings, passions, imagination become highly excited. Reason, judgment, understanding are put to sleep. All patient investigation, rigid scrutiny, and calm deliberation are out of the question. When nature throws off the unnatural depression of spirits, and permits the joyful sensations of humanity to arise, this natural change is pronounced the supernatural work of the holy spirit ; and the deluded victims are directed to date their conversion from this moment. They then embrace the religious

opinions of their preachers, without inquiry, examination or evidence ; and pretend to understand those abstruse questions which have always puzzled the wisest heads in christendom. Even uneducated females have no hesitation in condemning the ablest divines of the period, as heretics, unbelievers, and unconverted. If the excitement is among the Methodists, the converts heartily believe the doctrines of Wesley ; if among the orthodox, the five points of Calvin are embraced ; and if among the Unitarian Christians, liberal views of the gospel are foundly cherished ; and all the parties are equally positive that their opinions are literally true, and have been impressed upon their souls by the special influence of the holy spirit. Does the spirit teach Calvinism to one, Arminianism to a second, Unitarianism to a third, at one and the same time ? But this is not all. You immediately receive those who have obtained a hope into your communions. You require their hearty assent to all the articles of a long human confession. You bind them down to this fallible standard with solemn oaths and obligations ; and if they renounce the creed, you subject them to discipline and excommunication.

And is all this christian fruit ? Is this the natural consequence of a revival of pure religion in our land of liberty and knowledge ? By no means. Did not our Saviour command his hearers to judge for themselves concerning what was right ? Did not his apostles speak to wise men, and direct them to examine their instructions ? Did they not commend the Bereans for searching the scriptures daily, and for not being willing to take the opinions even of inspired teachers upon trust. And can a person find any time in a season of excitement for a calm and prayerful study of the sacred records ? And if he could, is he in a proper state to investigate the subjects of religion, while under the control of fear, and despondency, and despair ? And what motive is held out to induce him to investigate the nature of truth ? He knows he

cannot be admitted to the church unless he will unhesitatingly receive the sentiments of his minister. He knows that he must be denounced as unconverted, unless he will assent to all the terms of the human formula. He knows that he must be banished from christian fellowship, if he should be led by evidence to depart from the fallible standard of religious doctrine. Do you not throw every possible obstacle in the way of free inquiry and religious liberty? I do beseech you to remove all your unscriptural impediments in the way of divine truth. Require your hearers to believe and obey the scriptures. Let them spend at least one year in the study of the Bible before you compel them to swear fidelity to the dogmas of orthodoxy. Look at the instructions and example of our Saviour and his apostles; and see if you can find any authority for such proceedings.

7. In the seventh place, your revivals frequently produce mental derangement. This lamentable evil occurs in two different ways. One is this. Persons of delicate constitutions are exposed to the evening air, bad walking and weather, ill ventilated apartments; and bodily indisposition is the natural consequence. This co-operates with anxious minds, and shattered nerves, and depressed spirits, and thus dethrones reason. I recollect a case of this description which occurred in this place a few years since. The person was a young and modest female from a neighboring state. She became alarmed for her soul's welfare, and exposed her health while attending evening meetings. Insanity followed. I cannot recall the unpleasant circumstances without extreme pain; for she was the stay and staff of aged, and infirm, and indigent, parents; and it was truly melancholly to see one so young and fair and promising, exhibiting the most malicious behavior, and repeating the most horrid oaths, and blasphemies.—The other method in which your revivals produce derangement is this. Your horrid

views of the character of God and the nature of man ; your irrational notions of divine agency and human inability ; your frightful descriptions of an eternal material hell, sink into the minds of persons whose conscience is tender, whose heart is sincere, and whose temperament is melancholic. They dwell upon your dark, and dismal representations, until they feel themselves to be outcasts from hope, and heaven, and God. Fear and despair deprive them of their senses. It is not long since a young female in this place imagined herself to be one of the non-elect, although she had obtained sufficient hope at a former period to be admitted to the orthodox church. On one dark, stormy, dismal night, she left her boarding house, and terminated her wretched existence by drowning. Her body was discovered in a few weeks, but in too shocking a state to be seen by her agonized relatives. Had these been the only victims which I have known, my allusion to their unhappy fate would never have been penned. But, Sir, it is a most solemn and melancholy fact, that such cases are of frequent recurrence. O how many could I name who have thus been rendered torments to themselves, and curses to their relatives !

And is all this christian fruit ? Is this the natural consequence of a revival of pure religion in a land of Bibles ? By no means. Examine the scriptures. Did any such deplorable effects attend the instructions of Moses, or the denunciations of the Prophets ? Did any such lamentable results follow the ministry of our Saviour or his apostles ? No. And how do you reconcile this fact with the greatest evil of your excitements ? Is not human nature the same now as in former years ? Are mankind any more depraved now than in past ages ? Did not the inspired preachers declare the whole council of God ? Were they not as anxious for the conversion of sinners ; did they not love the souls of their hearers as well ; did they not know what measures to adopt

for the spread of truth, as well as orthodox ministers of the present period. Are you more faithful in applying the great principles of religion, and more skilful in managing the ignorant classes of society; or did the inspired instructors deliver different doctrines, and adopt different modes of operation? Not only so. What was the conduct of our Saviour towards those who were bowed down with a sense of their wickedness? 'Son, daughter, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven thee.' Does this mode of address bear the remotest resemblance to your treatment of the penitent? O that our people would look to the example and precepts of Jesus! As a follower of this master, I do beseech you to reflect on this subject, and to cease those modes of operation which are filling our hospitals with lunatics, and the breasts of relatives with unmingled grief or bitterness.

8. In the eighth place, your revivals are generally followed by an increased degree of indifference, irreligion and immorality. This is stated by your own denomination. And it is a most natural consequence of your unnatural commotion, following the law of all extremes which are ever tending to their opposites. The more respectable members of the congregation give practical evidence of their faith in orthodox doctrines. They believe that nothing can be done for their conversion, without the special influences of the holy spirit; and accordingly make themselves comparatively easy in delaying all attention to the subject until another revival. So that month after month, and even year after year, few or no additions are made to the communion. The more thoughtless and unprincipled indulge to greater excess. So that the house of God is deserted; the sabbath is spent in idleness, improper reading, unnecessary visiting or criminal dissipation; profaneness, falsehood, ignorance and open wickedness greatly abound. Some who have been sub-

jects of the excitement, seem to be rendered tenfold more depraved by the scenes through which they have passed ; and take the lead in the march of immorality and infidelity. All this and much more may be proved true from the declarations of your own ministers.

And is all this christian fruit ? Is this the natural consequence of a revival of pure religion in our land of christian institutions. By no means. Are we not at all times equally dependent on our heavenly Father ? And can we be released, even for a moment, from our obligations to gratitude, obedience, submission, resignation, confidence and devotion ? Are we not wholly indebted to Jesus for those personal, domestic, social, civil, literary and religious blessings, which raise us so highly above every ancient or modern unchristian nation ? And can we be excused from our obligations to receive him as our Master, imitate him as our Exemplar, obey him as our Judge or Ruler ? Are not all men our neighbors ? And can we innocently neglect to do unto them in our thoughts, feelings, conversation and conduct, as we would have them do unto us ? Are not our characters either improving or retrograding ? And are we at liberty to relinquish our unceasing self-discipline, self-examination and self-cultivation ? Are we not bound ever to think right, to feel right, speak right, and act right ? Have we any license to indulge in wrong thoughts, failings, affections, dispositions, conversation or behaviour ? Is any permission granted us for dulness and deadness in religion ? Will it be a sufficient excuse for these evils, to say that the influences of the holy spirit were withdrawn ; that we could not do otherwise under the frown of the Almighty ? I do beseech you to put no such sophistical and dangerous arguments into the hands of the abandoned. Do not thus aid the cause of irreligion and immorality.

9. In the ninth place, your revivals encourage false views of religion. I have now to notice but a few particulars. First, you give false notions of the nature of relig-

ion itself, by constantly talking about *getting religion*. The ignorant suppose, that this thing to be gotten, is something extrinsic, and can be purchased by a constant round of religious services. Now Jesus took special pains to guard against this error. Whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we must do all to the glory of God. We must fulfil all our obligations. We must do right at all times, and in all things, and under all circumstances. And we are more religious when performing known duties than when neglecting them for any services of human invention. Second, you inculcate false views of conversion. You make the unlearned expect that the spirit will accomplish the whole work in one moment; and that after feeling its operation on their soul, they can never fall from duty. Thousands and tens of thousands have been ruined by this false and unscriptural notion. We are commanded to be renewed in the temper of our minds day by day; and to be constantly turning from every thing wrong to the practice of every thing right. Third, you encourage erroneous views of the divine agency. You speak of Deity as coming among you. You ask him to pour out his spirit in a special manner. You talk of his leaving the place. All such heathenish notions sink into uneducated minds; and they really regard the Deity but little better than a fickle monarch. One who had been converted in your way, lately called upon his former pastor for a dismissal and recommendation. He said it was perfectly plain that Jesus was the Almighty God, for he even raised Lazarus from the dead. He was reminded of the prayer which Jesus uttered on that memorable occasion for divine assistance. His answer was, I presume God is a praying Being!!

Finally, you indirectly countenance unchristian behavior; for your converts are encouraged to denounce Unitarianism with boldness. Much of their zeal is manifested in this warfare. Instead of self-examination, serious meditation, reformation of all improper dispositions,

diligent study of the scriptures, much time is given to relating experiences, censuring other christians older, and more enlightened, and more holy than themselves. In short, the characters formed under revival influences are poor specimens generally of the influence of the genuine gospel. They do not resemble those individuals, in whose minds the seeds of heavenly wisdom were early sown, and who have cultivated those graces and virtues which adorn humanity, and which shone so conspicuously in the uniform deportment of our Saviour.

10. Such, Sir, are some of the common fruits of orthodox revivals. Many more, equally unchristian, might be mentioned, did my limits permit. I cannot help alluding to one or two more instances of a more aggravated nature. Look at the barbarous outrage lately committed by an orthodox family in Boston, on the person of a female relative from the country, in order to convert her from Unitarianism. You will find the disgraceful particulars in the *Christian Register* for the thirtieth of April. Look also at the evil effects of your excitements on female character. It is nothing uncommon to see those who were considered persons of modesty and delicacy, engaged in this holy warfare against Unitarians, denouncing them in the most shameful language, and persecuting them in the most cruel manner. It is matter of almost daily occurrence in this place, for girls to be told that they must go to hell if they attend a Unitarian meeting; and this too by those who profess to be followers of the meek and humble Jesus. Besides these things, there are usually proceedings in almost every revival, too indelicate, too indecent to be mentioned.

You will now aver, that I have not mentioned the good results of your religious excitements. I cheerfully grant what you require. I admit that some lukewarm professors are aroused to greater fidelity; that some good christians are induced to come forward to the ordinances; that many careless and thoughtless sinners

are awakened to seriousness, and that a few persons of immoral characters are reformed. This is all that you can justly claim. But it is fair to notice the limitation even of this statement. For you will allow that some who join the church at such seasons are really no better than before their admission; and that some who become professors are actually injured by their experiences. For all instances of genuine conversion and reformation, I gladly give thanks.

But this is not the whole of the story. I contend that all this good could have been effected without the attendant evils. The same persons could have been made christians in a more scriptural manner. Look to the churches of our fathers; were they not better filled than yours; were not their professors more godly; and were they not rendered so without the influence of a revival? Look to Scotland. Is not the number of communicants greater there than in your societies; and do they not give equal or better evidence of conversion; and not one soul of them was born again in the time of a revival. Could you not, then, by the proper and faithful use of scripture means, have made as many and as good christians, without producing such an abundant share of evil. I ask the public to decide if the disadvantages of your excitements do not far outweigh their advantages? I call upon you to examine this question; for I fear you are rushing headlong to temporal destruction. I fear you are giving a most dangerous wound to the cause of our common christianity. Before it be too late, O return to the Bible. Make that the standard of your faith and practice. Adopt the means there prescribed for the conversion of sinners; and make some amends for the aggravated evils you have inflicted.

IV. You assert that orthodox revivals are the special work of the holy spirit. I think a plain statement of facts will prove your assertion untrue; and also convince you, that these excitements are the natural fruit of human exertions.

1. In the first place, you know these revivals are never produced by the divinely appointed means of grace. They never follow the regular exercises of the sabbath; the solemn observance of gospel ordinances; the usual visits of the pastor; the devout study of the scriptures; the acts of secret and social devotion, and serious meditation and self examination. No. All your apparatus must be of an unusual character, and of human origin and contrivance. Meetings of various kinds must be multiplied. An unnatural style of preaching, praying and conversation must be adopted. New arts and modes of operation must be employed. Now you well know that God has nowhere promised to bless these measures; and you also well know, that he has promised to bless the means of his own appointment. Can you then believe, that he never blesses, with the special outpouring of his holy spirit, the means of his own appointment; and that he always blesses, with the special outpouring of his holy spirit, the means of human invention and addition? No. Then you must admit that these revivals are not the special work of the holy spirit; but the natural product of human machinery.

2. In the second place, you know these revivals are produced by the measures of different and even opposing denominations. They originated with the founders of Methodism. They are now got up by Calvinists, Arminians and Unitarians. The Unitarian Christians succeed in producing them the oftenest, and the most extensively; the liberal Baptists and the Arminian Methodists rank next in point of frequency and extent, and the Calvinists fall far behind both the other sects in these respects. You also know that the peculiar religious opinions of each denomination are directly opposed to the peculiarities of both the others. Calvinism is decidedly opposed to Unitarianism and Arminianism; and Unitarianism is opposed to Arminianism and Calvinism. Now if the excitement in one

party is the special work of the holy spirit, it must be in all; for the same features and characteristics are exhibited in all. Can you then believe that a God of truth sanctions error as much, and in the same manner, as he sanctions truth; which must be the case if these revivals are his special work; for Unitarianism and Calvinism cannot both be truth? Can you believe that he blesses Unitarianism with a greater outpouring of his holy spirit, than he does Calvinism; which must be the case if these excitements are his special work; for they are produced oftenest and most extensively under Unitarian preaching? If you cannot, then you must acknowledge that these revivals are not the special work of the holy spirit, but the natural fruit of human agency.

3. In the third place, you know these revivals are confined to those who believe in their divine origin. You sometimes find a society of Episcopalians and a society of Calvinists in the same village. Members of the same family belong to each; and near neighbors attend the different churches. The doctrinal opinions of both parties may be expressed in the thirty nine articles. The Calvinists believe in the divine origin of these excitements; they adopt the necessary measures for their production; nearly all their members become more or less excited. In the mean time, the Episcopalians regard their exertions as unscriptural and fanatical; they regard the revival as of human origin and pernicious tendency; while their friends and neighbors are deeply interested in the work, they remain calm and unaffected, and scarcely an individual has his feelings and passions aroused. Such instances are of frequent occurrence. Take Lowell for an example. You recollect the account which Mr Beckwith, the Calvinistic minister, gave of the powerful revival in that place, and for which document he obtained a ten dollar premium. You remember that he regarded the Episcopalians as enemies to the good work, and

that a member of that society exposed several errors in this premium statement. Now why is the excitement confined to those who believe in its divine origin? Why does it not extend to those who consider it the work of human beings and openly oppose its progress, and thus convince them of their dangerous mistake and aggravated wickedness? Can the mere belief on this point prevent the outpouring of the spirit? You must either admit that it can, which amounts to a perfect absurdity; or you must allow that these revivals are not the special work of the holy spirit, but the mere results of human opinion and action.

4. In the fourth place, you know these revivals are deliberately voted into being by orthodox ministers. I will illustrate this remark by a reference to the actual proceedings of your denomination. Your leaders saw and loudly lamented the rapid and extensive spread of Unitarianism. They concluded that its progress could be checked in no way so effectually as by a general religious excitement. One or two associations resolved to use the necessary means for its production. A large body of your clergy met in Boston at Election, and determined to do all in their power to secure the influence of the women, to cease controversy with Unitarians, and to make every possible exertion for the existence of a powerful revival. The same thing has been virtually done in several other meetings of the leaders in other States. Letters have been passed in relation to this desirable object. The conclusion of the whole matter seemed to be, that the work should be commenced in the cities, and then extended into the country. The revival preachers were accordingly stationed at their respective posts. It became convenient to have the notorious Beman in Charleston, S. C. When the train was well laid, the match was applied. The prayer bell rung at dawn of morning, from Maine to Georgia. All the revival machinery before used, and even some new inventions, were put into full operation.

And in many places some success has attended this mighty and combined effort. All this, and very much more of the same character, you know is literal truth. Now look at some of the votes of your ministers which have been brought to light. They resolved that it was their duty to have a revival of religion in their respective parishes, and that they would use *greater* means for its production. Now, if it was *their duty* to have a revival, was not the work their own? Can you believe that human beings are any where commanded to pour out the holy spirit? No. Then you must admit, that these revivals are not the special work of the spirit, but the natural result of increased human labor and management.

5. In the fifth place, you know these revivals are got up according to certain prescribed rules. Dr Beecher preached a discourse on this subject in Beverly some time since, an abstract of which I have received. He stated explicitly that these excitements could be produced at any time, and even kept in continual operation. He compared the influence of the spirit, to the law of gravitation; and affirmed that nothing was wanting but human co-operation to secure constant conversions. He then described very minutely the various measures to be adopted, and the different parts each class were to act in the drama. Not only so; others have published books for this purpose, and instructed the leaders what must be said and done, to secure success. Now if these prescribed regulations will produce the desired revival, is it not the product of human machinery? Has God any where or in any manner authorized such publications, or promised to bestow his blessing on such human measures? Look at the political leaders in our country. Are they not laying plans and adopting means to secure the election of a certain President? Should their efforts be crowned with success, would they be justified in calling the result of their operations, the special work of the holy spirit?

Do not all parts of the apparatus for the production of a religious excitement depend equally on human agency and management? Can you then believe that the former is the work of man, and the latter the work of God? No. Then you must admit that these revivals are not the special work of the holy spirit, but the natural product of well contrived human machinery.

6. In the sixth place, you know these revivals are produced or checked by the efforts of the human will. Let me illustrate this remark by three well known facts. The first is this. When you have organized a feeble church in a Unitarian parish, you immediately commence operations for the production of a religious excitement. You seem to think that some thoughtless individuals may be drawn in by your new and extraordinary measures. The pastor of the society devotes his principal attention to the accomplishment of this object. The one you have stationed in Billerica lately informed his church that he must leave them unless they could get up a revival. He called upon all to rise who would aid him in this desirable work; and then instructed them when, and how often, and how long to pray. Can you believe the Deity may be thus induced to aid in accomplishing a party and sectarian effort? Does he take sides with the Unitarian Christians when they meet with so much success in drawing from Calvinistic societies?

The second fact is this. When you are getting up an excitement in any place, you warn your hearers to avoid society; all places of innocent amusement; all meetings for literary instruction and improvement. In Northampton, an objection was made to the public celebration of Independence, for fear it might terminate the delusion. And even in Boston very lately, one of your preachers exhorted his hearers to retire home in silence, to avoid all conversation with each other, and to fasten their attention upon the solemn truths delivered. Can you believe the operation of the holy spirit is prevented by such slight

and innocent causes? And finally, these revivals may be checked and suspended by an appeal to reason and common sense. I have known two instances in which they were terminated very suddenly by such an appeal. The Unitarian minister in each case plainly stated views similar to those I have here advanced, and the delusion was dissipated. Now can you believe that the Deity is thus at the disposal of his sinful children? Can you believe that his special presence can be secured at any time in aid of a party undertaking, or driven away at any time by a free expression of honest opinion? If you cannot, then you will acknowledge that these revivals are not the special work of the holy spirit, but the fruit of party and sectarian measures.

7. In the seventh place, you know there is a great difference of opinion on these revivals among your leaders. This has been fully manifested, and even published to the world. The circumstances are briefly these. About three years ago, a mighty effort was made to get up an extensive revival. In the state of New York, the most unprincipled measures were adopted, and the most disgraceful scenes were transacted. The leaders of this work were Messrs Beman and Finney. Dr Beecher and his coadjutors in New England had already succeeded in producing some considerable excitement. They feared an explosion would take place, should the proceedings of the New York revivalists be known in this vicinity. They accordingly wrote Dr Beman a long letter on the subject, and urged him to desist from such dangerous practices. This gave offence; and eventually led to the famous New Lebanon convention, to which twenty-four of the leaders were invited by Messrs. Beecher and Beman. The object of the meeting was 'to see in what respects there is an agreement, between brethren from different sections of the country, *in regard to principles and measures* 'in conducting and promoting revivals of religion.' Resolutions were offered on each side, de-

signed to condemn the conduct of the other. Take the following one of Dr Beecher and his friends. 'There may be so much human infirmity, and indiscretion, and wickedness of man, in conducting a revival of religion, as to render the general evils which flow from this infirmity, indiscretion, and wickedness of man *greater* than the local and temporary advantages of the revival.' This is precisely my opinion. This was designed to teach Beman that his revival was of this description. Take Beman's answer. 'Attempts to remedy evils which exist in revivals of religion, may, through the infirmity, and indiscretion, and wickedness of man, do more injury and ruin more souls, than those evils which such attempts are intended to correct.' This was designed as a hint for Dr Beecher to attend to his own business. I have not room for further extracts. The records of the convention are before the world, and exhibit a most remarkable specimen of wrangling, bitterness, hatred and impiety. After spending some eight or ten days in quarrelling, singing and praying, their meeting was dissolved. Their proceedings will remain to posterity, a disgrace to the individuals concerned; a lasting reproach to the cause of Christ, and an unanswerable argument against the divine origin of revivals. For what did these learned divines assemble? Did they wish to prescribe rules for the regulation of the holy spirit? So it must seem, if these revivals are the work of the holy spirit. For they wished to come to some agreement on the 'principles and measures in conducting and promoting revivals.' This very convention demonstrates that these leaders considered such excitements to be under their own control. Can you believe they were authorized to adopt measures for the better regulation of the holy spirit? No. Then you will allow that these revivals are not the special work of God, but the natural result of human wickedness and management.

8. In the eighth place, you know the effects of these revivals are not what the apostle describes as the fruits of the spirit. He assures us that love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance are the fruits of the spirit. You must admit that a great share of hatred, sorrow, dissension, reviling, unkindness, wickedness, unbelief, passion and intemperate language and conduct has been the unfailing attendant of orthodox excitements. Look at those which raged so extensively in New York three years ago. The orthodox ministers in that state regard them as most wonderful displays of divine power. But how did Dr Beecher and his friends consider them? Dr Nettleton, the greatest revival preacher of the New England party, makes these remarks concerning them. 'A number of churches have experienced a revival of anger, wrath, malice, envy, and evil speaking, without the knowledge of a single conversion.' Speaking of preachers of that region, he uses this language. 'They do cultivate, and awake in others, what very much resembles the passion of anger, wrath, malice, envy, and evil speaking.' And what are the words of Dr Beecher in relation to the same excitement? It is this. 'It is a spirit of fanaticism, of spiritual pride, censoriousness, and insubordination to the order of the gospel.' Now if Dr Beecher could see such evils in the New York orthodox revivals, is it strange that we see greater evils in the New England revivals; *we*, who do not regard them as the special work of the holy spirit? And above all, look at what is doing at the present moment. The same scenes are acting over again in New York; yes, the same most disgraceful scenes. And still you are reading from your pulpits letters and statements from those very actors in order to get up a revival in Boston and the vicinity. Not only so. You are introducing many of their very measures which you so severely censured three years ago. You are having your anxious seats, and anxious meetings, and four day

meetings, and a long list of other equally unscriptural and unwarrantable measures. You will not then call me uncharitable, if I apply the same language to the fruits of your over zealous labors, that Dr Beecher and his friends applied to the results of Beman's and Finney's exertions. I say you are promoting, 'a revival of anger, wrath, malice, envy, and evil speaking;' and surely these are not the fruits of the spirit. So that you must admit that these revivals are not the special work of the holy spirit, but the natural product of your new and unscriptural means.

9. In the ninth place, these revivals are precisely what you would expect from the measures adopted. There is no occasion to resort to special divine agency for an explanation of a single circumstance; for every particular of the excitement can be satisfactorily explained on perfectly natural principles. Take a few examples. In every revival you know that many, who are as thoroughly excited as any of the converts; who feel as deep convictions of sin as any; who are brought out as clearly as any; who relate as wonderful experiences as any; who give as satisfactory evidence of conversion as any, soon fall away and call the whole business a delusion. Now what produced such effects on these persons? The special operation of the holy spirit? No. You cannot admit this; for you hold that all on whose heart the spirit has exerted a special influence will never fall from grace. Then you must allow that the means used to promote the revival produced all these striking results. Very well. If the means used have produced these clear marks of conversion in so many cases, why not in all the instances? Perhaps you will say that the others persevere in the ways of well doing. And do not thousands in every denomination exhibit equal or greater fruits of christian holiness who never experienced any such excitement, and who reject the orthodox doctrines. You must acknowledge that all the characteristics of the revivals are produced by the means

used; by an appeal to the fears and hopes and sympathies of the converts; by combined exertions, and peculiar circumstances, and religious considerations. So that there is nothing special or supernatural in the whole process.

Take another illustration. You know it frequently happens that those, who have been converted at one revival, and who have been exemplary christians for several years, are again converted in another excitement. Not a few orthodox ministers and deacons are to be ranked in this class. They declare that their former experiences were all a delusion; and that they now feel assured that the special influences of the spirit have been exerted on their hearts. Now, if the first conversion was merely the effect of the means used, why is not the second or third? Were not their experiences equally striking and convincing the first time as the last? Does their conduct furnish any better evidence in the last case than in the first? No. The whole mystery is solved in one word. Their peculiar thoughts and feelings were the natural consequence of the influences to which they were exposed. They supposed them to be the production of the holy spirit; and this mistake led to the reconversion. And you may cause persons of exciteable temperament, who hold to this belief, to pass through a new regeneration as often as you can get up a general excitement, even if it should happen every month. You see then, that our experiences furnish no rational or scriptural evidence of the special operation of the holy spirit; but their frequent recurrence when exposed to similar influences furnishes positive proof to the contrary.

But this is not all. Many, who are now members of Unitarian churches, and preachers in the Unitarian denomination, were converted in your revivals. They gave as certain evidence of their regeneration as any of those who still adhere to Calvinism. They were ad-

mitted to your communions, and for years maintained an irreproachable standing. They searched the scriptures seriously and patiently. They could find none of the peculiar doctrines of orthodoxy ; but were compelled by the most convincing scriptural evidence to embrace Unitarianism. They openly confessed the result of their honest convictions, and cheerfully submitted to your manifold persecutions for the cause of truth and righteousness. You could see no diminution in their piety or holiness. They once believed in the divine origin of your excitements. They can now account satisfactorily for every effect produced, on natural causes. They now believe them to be the result of well contrived human machinery. They have the evidence of reason, experience, observation, and scripture on their side. Now how will you explain this fact in consistency with your views of the special operation of the spirit? Will you say that these distinguished individuals were not really converted? This you will hardly dare to affirm, for you know they related as good experiences as any of your converts; you know they exhibited as genuine fruits of repentance as any who were received to your churches; you know their characters, the only scriptural evidence of regeneration, are as good now as when they believed your doctrinal opinions, and as good, to say the least, as any who remain in your communion. Will you say they were truly converted, and are still worthy christians, notwithstanding their Unitarian sentiments? This you will scarcely dare to admit; for you hope to gain some advantage to your party by denying Unitarians the christian name, although in this particular you will eventually find yourself greatly mistaken. Will you say they have fallen from grace. This you dare not acknowledge; for it is contrary to your creed; and you well know that many more of your converts would fall from grace in this same manner, were they exposed to Unitarian influences and permitted to reach the scriptures unshackled. Hence your great anxiety to keep hope-

fully pious students from Harvard University; and hence your exertions to prevent your professors from associating with Unitarian companions, and hence your human creeds and enslaving oaths and obligations. Well, you may take which alternative you please. In either case, you will be obliged to acknowledge the human origin of your revivals. For the experiences of this most respectable class of the community are not to be answered with a sneer, or an assertion. There is nothing therefore in your religious excitements but what can be satisfactorily and perfectly explained on natural principles; and the evidence against their divine origin is conclusive and unanswerable. I have said that these revivals are precisely what you would expect from the means used. I must qualify this expression a little. Nothing surprises me more, than that so little effect is produced and so little disturbance created by such bold, daring, unscriptural measures. I want no stronger argument than this against total depravity, and in favor of the purity and dignity of human nature. If the ignorant and uneducated can withstand this unhallowed ordeal, it is satisfactory proof to my mind, that there is something within them of a high, noble, divine origin.

10. In the tenth place, your revivals are promoted as the last expedient for maintaining the sinking cause of orthodoxy. Believing your views of religion to be true and important, you are doubtless anxious to have them preserved and perpetuated. Three methods have been adopted for securing a reception of your theological sentiments. The first is education. This has proved a very efficient and successful method in former years; but its efficacy is greatly diminished at the present period. For when your children arrive at a proper age, they go into society; they exercise their common sense; they associate with liberal companions; they apply their reason to the study of the scriptures, and perhaps they read unitarian publications. In this way, they triumph over the misty, unintelligible, and

mysterious doctrines of Calvinism, and embrace rational and scriptural views of religion. How many parents could I name, whose children are decidedly liberal.

To this important means of perpetuating your peculiar notions, great attention is still given. Even the babes in your infant schools are indoctrinated into the belief of the trinity and other kindred absurdities. But all this does not secure the desired object. The spirit of free inquiry is abroad in the land; and most of those who dare to submit to its influence, are carried away from the creeds and confessions and inventions of the dark ages. The second method is conviction from investigation. But can you point to an individual in our community, of unprejudiced mind, of good understanding, of upright and honest motives, who has been led to embrace orthodoxy by a candid examination of the scriptures? No; such an occurrence would be considered almost miraculous. The last resort then must be made to revivals. Yes; your leaders have repeatedly declared, that your only hope was in revivals; that the only hope of the church was in revivals; that the only hope of the ministry was in revivals. This declaration discloses the secret. *Revivals are the only hope of the orthodox.* How so? Because you can induce people to receive orthodox doctrines without evidence, when your excitement has benumbed their reason and common sense. When you can make them profess their hearty belief in all the articles of your long creed, and solemnly promise to make this human formulary their standard of religious truth. When their mental strength is thus prostrated, you can bind them to perpetual servitude, and rivet on the chains of your party, and brand their very souls with the stamp of Calvinism. And in no other way can your cause be maintained. Hence the uncommon effort of the present moment to create an extensive excitement. Hence the request of Dr Wisner to his people, to have them bring all their friends and acquaintances who knew not Christ; or in other words, all they

could obtain from unitarian societies. Hence the cruel and barbarous treatment of the unitarian lady from the country, whose case has been recently published ; and a thousand other circumstances of a similar nature. Were not the object of this new and great and general movement well understood by our community, I would prove more fully that it is designed to save the sinking cause of orthodoxy. Now can you believe, that when your religious opinions cannot be preserved and perpetuated by the means and measures of God's ordination, he will appear in a special, supernatural, miraculous manner to uphold orthodoxy? If you cannot, then you will admit that these revivals are not the work of his holy spirit, but the combined exertions of your leaders.

11. In the eleventh place, the Bible furnishes us with no account of such revivals. No such measures as you now adopt, were ever adopted in the times of prophets or apostles, for the conversion of sinners or unbelievers. No such results as now follow the operation of your human contrivances, ever attended their means of spiritual renovation and improvement. Nothing of the kind can be found from the first word in Genesis to the last sentence in Revelation. But the scriptures furnish us with accounts of several real revivals of religion. I will examine three of the most important, in order to establish my positions. In the book of Nehemiah you find a very full and interesting statement on this question. The people were greatly in need of religious instruction and improvement. The Lord selected Ezra as the revival preacher of the period. Let us now hear what method he adopted to increase true religion. These are the precious words of the sacred writer.

‘ And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month. And he read therein before the street

that was before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law. And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose. And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; and when he opened it all the people stood up; and Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands, and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground. And the Levites caused the people to understand the law; and the people stood in their place. So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading. And Ezra the priest the scribe, and the Levites that taught the people, said unto all the people—This day is holy unto the Lord your God; mourn not, nor weep; for all the people wept when they heard the words of the law. Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy unto our Lord; neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength. So the Levites stilled all the people, saying, hold your peace, for the day is holy; neither be ye grieved. And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them.'

Here then we have a very clear account of a most important and truly scriptural revival of religion. It bears no resemblance whatever to your modern excitements, but differs from them most essentially in several striking particulars. And first, you notice that the law of God, all the Bible they then possessed, was made the only standard of religious instruction. It is well known that in your modern revivals, the Bible is almost altogether neglected, or perverted to sectarian purposes. In proof of this assertion I give you the fol-

lowing sentences from a worthy orthodox church-member who took an active part in the early stages of the famous New York excitement. 'But fortunately for the suffering Bible, but very few quotations were made from it; I think not as many in three months, as I have heard in a single sermon! The Bible must bend to accommodate the subject, rather than the subject to comply with the Bible. Passages not congenial to the spirit of the times, or passages which seemed to carry on their face a palpable contradiction of any favorite topic, must be introduced, lest the people should be led from them, to distrust the positions which they seemed to contradict. And here the powers of ingenuity were put to the rack, to bring these passages to comply with the design of the preacher.' Read the whole of Brockway's delineation of the characteristic features of a revival of religion in Troy. And secondly, you notice that the congregation was composed of *men*, women, and children; whereas but few males are to be seen in your various meetings for the outpouring of the spirit. And third, you notice that the priest read the law distinctly, and then gave the true meaning to the people; whereas your mode of communicating instruction is by exhortation, denunciation and declamation. And fourth, you notice the preachers told their hearers not to weep, or grieve, or be sorry; whereas your principal object seems to be to excite tears, and grief, and sorrow, and expression, and lamentation, and wailing. And, fifth, you notice that the ministers directed their people to go home, and eat, drink and be merry; whereas your advice seems to be for them to remain at meeting as many hours as possible, to fast as long as nature will permit, and to banish all mirth, and rejoicing, and gladness. And, sixth, you notice the leaders ordered their society to send portions to the destitute; whereas your direction seems to be for them to send sectarian tracts, a most unwelcome portion, calculated to excite disgust rather than gratitude. I hope you

and all your friends will carefully examine the means and nature of this Jewish revival.

Look next at a true revival of religion produced by the preaching of our Saviour. 'And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain; and when he was set, his disciples came unto him.' And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying.—Saying what?—'That in the Godhead are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and that these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory?' No. Saying what?—'That the only Redeemer of the elect is the eternal son of God, who for this purpose became man, and continues to be God and man in two distinct natures and one person forever?' No. Saying what?—'That the burden of damnation, from which we were delivered, was laid upon Christ; that it was requisite he should feel the severity of the divine vengeance, in order to appease the wrath of God; that the design and end of this oblation was to atone, pacify, and reconcile God, by giving him a full and adequate compensation or satisfaction for the sins of his elect?' No. Saying what?—'That by the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained unto everlasting death; that these angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished?' No. Saying what?—'That from the original corruption of man, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions.' No. Saying what?—'That the wicked in hell will not be able in that conflict to overcome their enemy, and to deliver themselves; that God will then undertake to deal with them, will gird himself with might to execute wrath, will be their enemy, and will act the part of an enemy with a wit-

ness; that after they have endured these torments millions of ages, their bodies, which will have been burning and roasting all this while in these glowing flames, yet shall not have been consumed, but will remain to roast through an eternity yet?' No. He said nothing of this nature; not one word about the fundamentals of orthodoxy in his long revival sermon. Read the whole discourse. Does it bear the faintest resemblance to your modern revival sermons? Look at his prayers. Are they made the model of your revival devotions? Look at his whole course of conduct and preaching. Does not his entire example condemn all your fanatical proceedings, in a voice louder than the trump of the archangel?

Finally, look at the revival on the day of Pentecost. The holy spirit was shed abroad in a miraculous manner on the apostles, but *not* on the three thousand converts. No. They were convinced by satisfactory evidence, that Jesus, whom they had crucified, was the promised Messiah. They felt their guilt of this sin, were stung by the reproaches of an accusing conscience, and cried out, 'men and brethren, what shall we do.' The apostles did not tell them that their question could not be publicly answered; that all who were anxious must remain for a private interview; and then teach them the unintelligible dogmas of Calvinism. No. They preached Christ in a plain and intelligible manner. They preached repentance, or reformation, for the remission of their sins. They preached baptism as a sign of entrance to the christian school. They promised them the gift of the holy spirit, which was peculiar to their condition and circumstances. On that day three thousand were added to the church. There were no delays for prayer meetings, or conference meetings, or anxious meetings, or inquiry meetings, or whispering meetings, or four-day meetings. There were no delays for indoctrinating them into a system of human inventions, or for the

relation of wonderful experiences, or for subscribing to human creeds. No. They believed one point, the Messiahship of Jesus; and to him were they directed as their only master in matters of religion. Examine the whole account for yourself, and see if you can find the faintest resemblance to one single feature in your modern excitements. Sir, the example and instructions of our Saviour and his apostles furnish the most satisfactory and unanswerable argument for the human origin of your revivals. Let any man in his sober senses examine the record of their doings and sayings, and he must be convinced of this truth; for he cannot find one circumstance in their whole history to justify the praying, preaching, visiting, conversing and acting of orthodox leaders. And can it be, that your revivals, which are condemned by every page of the Bible, are the special work of the holy spirit?

12. Finally, such are some of my reasons for believing that orthodox revivals are the effects of human agency, and not the special work of the holy spirit. These arguments appear to my mind altogether unanswerable. I have endeavored to notice all the evidence by which your positions are supported. If anything important has been omitted, it has been altogether unintentional on my part. The three main sources of proof for your belief on this question, I have however noticed but incidentally. I will now give them a more full consideration. To prove that your revivals are the special work of the holy spirit, you first appeal to the *feelings* of your converts. This is dangerous testimony; for it proves too much, and consequently is worse than nothing. The Mahometan *feels* that his religion is from heaven. The Swedenborgian *feels* that his Master was divinely commissioned. The Shaker *feels* that his animal excitement is the operation of the Almighty. The deluded fanatic *feels* that his crazy dreams are the suggestions of divine wisdom, or that his contortions and writhings are the special work

of the holy spirit. And so, I might say, of many other religionists ; and if *feeling* is satisfactory evidence in one case, it must be in all. And above all, I might appeal to the multitude of Unitarians, who have been converted in your revivals, and whose *feelings* now teach them that, your excitements are not the special work of the holy spirit ; and whose Bibles instruct them that this kind of evidence furnishes no satisfactory proof of the truth of your position.

But in the second place, you appeal to remarkable instances of conversion. You aver that scoffing and irreligious persons, calling themselves Deists, or Universalists, or Unitarians, or Episcopalians, have occasionally been brought into the christian fold by your revivals. Admit the fact, and what does it prove ? Nothing to your purpose. For according to your own account, these individuals were destitute of piety. If so, their conscience was against their practice, and in favor of religion. Notwithstanding their sneers, they were uneasy in their own souls. They were the very persons of all others to be frightened into a surrender, when exposed to the peculiar artillery of your warfare. Nothing but the thunders of Sinai, and the brimstone of the burning lake, could arouse the sensibilities of their depraved hearts. I could wish, that more of this class were exposed to the various influences which you bring into operation on such occasions. And those very examples I should quote in proof of my belief in the human origin of your revivals. For your causes, your machinery, are perfectly adequate to the effects produced, to the work accomplished. And when you remember that most of this description, who give such good evidence of conversion in the season of excitement, afterwards fall away and become ten fold more the children of hell, you will perceive that my argument from this source is doubly fortified.

But after all, you appeal to the lives of your best converts, in proof of the special operation of the holy

spirit. Now if you could prove from reason and scripture that the heart of man is totally depraved, and that the supernatural influence of the Deity is absolutely essential to its conversion to holiness, and that your disciples are truly regenerated, your argument would have some weight. But the two first propositions never have been established, and I am fully persuaded, they never will be, while God remains unchangeable. Not only so. Look into your own denomination. Read the lives of your most pious members. You will find that much the largest proportion of those who have done most honor to the religion of Jesus, never passed through any such excitement, never knew the time or manner of their conversion, never knew the period when they did not love their Father in heaven, and endeavor to keep his commandments. Look into the unitarian church. You may find no small number of individuals who exhibit as much scriptural evidence, to say the least, of being the true disciples of Jesus, as any in the orthodox ranks. They have no belief in the necessity of a miraculous influence of the holy spirit on the human soul in order to its regeneration. They make no pretences to any experiences of this nature. And to what source will you attribute their goodness? They indeed receive the scriptural doctrines of conversion and divine influences. They believe that the spirit helpeth our infirmities. They cherish this belief with gratitude. And if the common influences of the holy spirit are sufficient for so many, why not for all?

But one argument more, and I have done with this division. The reasons frequently assigned by some of your leaders for promoting revivals are demonstrative proof of their human origin. And what are some of the most remarkable? Why, the sale of pews in a new orthodox church; the means for supporting an orthodox minister; the destruction of the unitarian heresy, and others of an equally party nature. I, therefore, call upon you, and all your adherents, to examine my arguments

on this question ; to consider my facts on this subject ; and either to answer my defence with more powerful evidence, or submit to my conclusion.

V. You assert that those who oppose orthodox revivals are enemies to the cause of Christ. I think a plain statement of facts will prove your assertion untrue ; and also convince you, that the opposers to your excitements are wholly devoted to the promotion of pure and undefiled religion.

1. In the first place, who have been the opposers of orthodox revivals? The most distinguished of the orthodox themselves. Yes ; read the history of our pious fathers. They knew nothing of such excitements until the days of Whitefield. They resolutely opposed his new and unscriptural measures. Their opposition continued until within a few years, except by a minority. And at the present moment, no small number of your more judicious professors are unwilling to adopt your singular modes of operation, and do not hesitate to express their decided disapprobation of your proceedings. I wish it were in my power to present you with an extract from a discourse, delivered at the ordination of Mr Albroy, by the Rev Mr Withington. A more decided attack upon your whole system of revivals was never uttered. Not only so. Look to the Episcopal denomination. You will allow their creed to be sufficiently evangelical. But you know they have opposed your revivals with an almost unanimous voice. Above all, look to Scotland. From the days of Knox to the present reign of Chalmers, you find no revivalists in that most learned and pious orthodox denomination. I could refer you to multitudes more who adhere to the articles of your creed, but who are open opposers to your excitements. And will you rank all these orthodox christians of past and present generations among the enemies of Christ? Will you not admit that many of this number have done more for the cause of what *you* consider pure religion, than any of

your revival leaders? Is not your assertion altogether untrue and slanderous. But you meant to condemn Unitarians. Very well.

2. In the second place, why do Unitarians oppose your revivals? I answer for myself. I have been in the midst of your excitements. I have experienced something of their power and influence. I have had a fair view of their operation on human beings. I have witnessed their pernicious effects on many individuals. I believe they are produced by unscriptural measures. I believe they yield unchristian fruit. I believe they are the special work of men and women. I know that many of the best and ablest orthodox divines have entertained this same belief on these several questions. I must therefore act in consistency with my convictions. I conscientiously oppose their existence and prevalence. I do this from the best of motives; from a regard to the plain instructions of my Saviour. I wish to banish all such unhallowed commotions from the land. I believe this can be done in one way, and in but one way. Convince people that their experiences in seasons of excitement are not the *special* work of the holy spirit, and the desired work is accomplished. Convince them that God does not exert a supernatural influence in the conversion of sinners, and the reign of fanaticism will have received a death blow. Convince them that all their thoughts and feelings in times of a revival are the natural effect of the means used and measures adopted, and your papers will forever be filled with lamentations for the withdrawal of divine, miraculous influences. To effect this object, has been the design of my present undertaking. I have presented evidence enough to satisfy any rational and candid mind. But I do not expect complete success at present. There is great ignorance in the community. Many dare not look into the facts on this question. Many will be deterred by your leaders from reading this and similar publications. But the increasing evil of these excitements will become more and

more evident as the difficulty in producing them increases. Look into the Western States, and see what this very principle of special agency, is doing for the Mormornites. Unless this error is banished from christendom, many most alarming transactions will be made the occasion of christian lamentation. Having stated my views fully and distinctly, I now say that I am not opposing a revival of pure and undefiled religion. No. This is the grand object of all my thoughts, desires, prayers and exertions; and may God crown them with desired success.

3. In the third place, how can a revival of pure and undefiled religion be produced. In but one way, The work must be accomplished by christians. A great and mighty reformation must begin at the house of God. First, the Bible and the Bible alone, must be made the standard, and the only standard, of christian faith and practice; and all human creeds, confessions, formularies of faith must be banished from the world. Secondly, all who profess to be followers of Christ must be contented with the single name of Christian; and all the appellations which have been derived from human invention of doctrinal opinions must be forgotten. Thirdly, all Christians must judge each other by the christian rule; by their fruits, their conduct, and not by their party names or sentiments; and acknowledge all as brethren who receive Jesus as their Master, and exhibit a virtuous character. Fourthly, all Christians must obey the commands of the Saviour, and endeavor to do towards each other in all things as they would have others do unto them; and in this way cause all to forget their differences of opinion and unite on the common ground of salvation. Until these things have taken place, christendom will experience no very valuable or extensive revival of pure religion; and when these things are accomplished, the irreligious and unbelieving world will be drawn into the fold, by the example and writings of such consistent followers of the meek and lowly Jesus.

4. I have thus given you my honest reasons for believing your five assertions untrue. If you wish for certificates to establish any of my positions, they shall be readily furnished. I hope you will seriously consider my statements and arguments, and either acknowledge the conclusion to which they lead, or return a satisfactory answer. I have endeavored to speak with great plainness of language; for the subject and occasion demand frankness and honesty. I suppose you will call some of my remarks severe; but are they more severe than truth and justice exact? Is not the following extract from the pious Richard Baxter somewhat applicable to certain professors? 'It is one of the most dangerous diseases of professors, and greatest scandals of this age, that persons taken for eminently religious, are more impatient of plain, though just reproof, than many a drunkard, swearer, or fornicator. And when they have spent hours or days in the seeming earnest confession of their sin, and lament before God and man that they cannot do it with more grief and tears; yet they take it for a heinous injury in another that will say half so much against them, and take him for a malignant enemy of the Godly who will call them as they call themselves. They wish that the chief business of a preacher should be to praise them, and set them above the rest, as the only people of God; and they take him for an enemy that will tell them the truth. But the scandal is greatest in those preachers themselves, who cannot endure to hear that they are sinners. So tender and impatient of reproof are some, yea, some that for their learning, and preaching, and piety, are ranked in the highest form, or expect to be so, that almost nothing but flattery or praise can please them; and they can hardly bear the gentlest reproof, no, nor a contradiction of any of their opinions.

Yours respectfully.

BERNARD WHITMAN.

Waltham, May, 1831.



